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TITLE:

SOPHOCLES
PHILOCTETES

PLACE:

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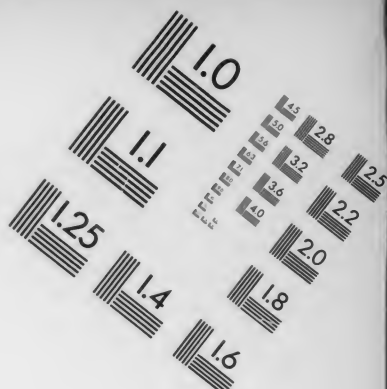
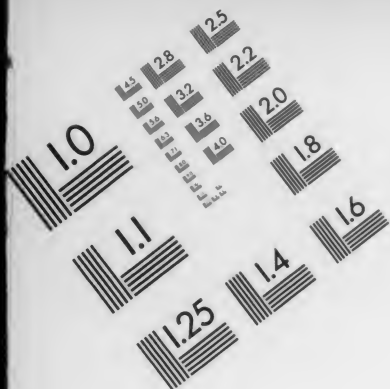


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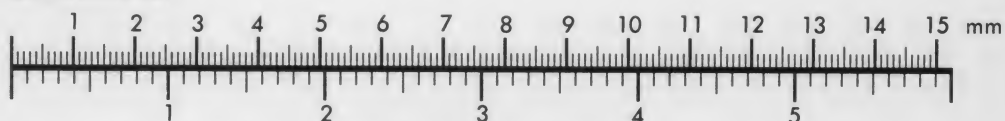
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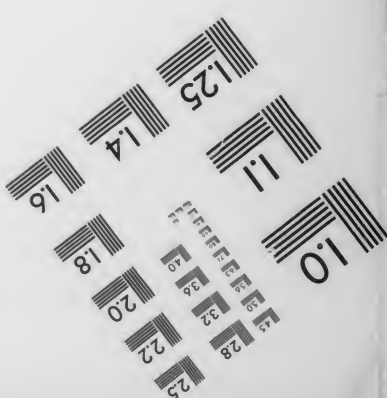
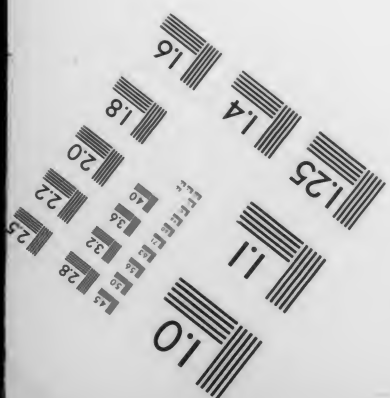
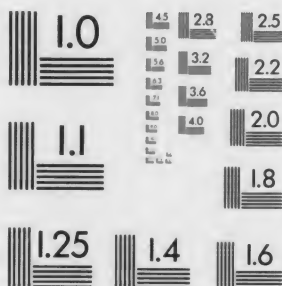
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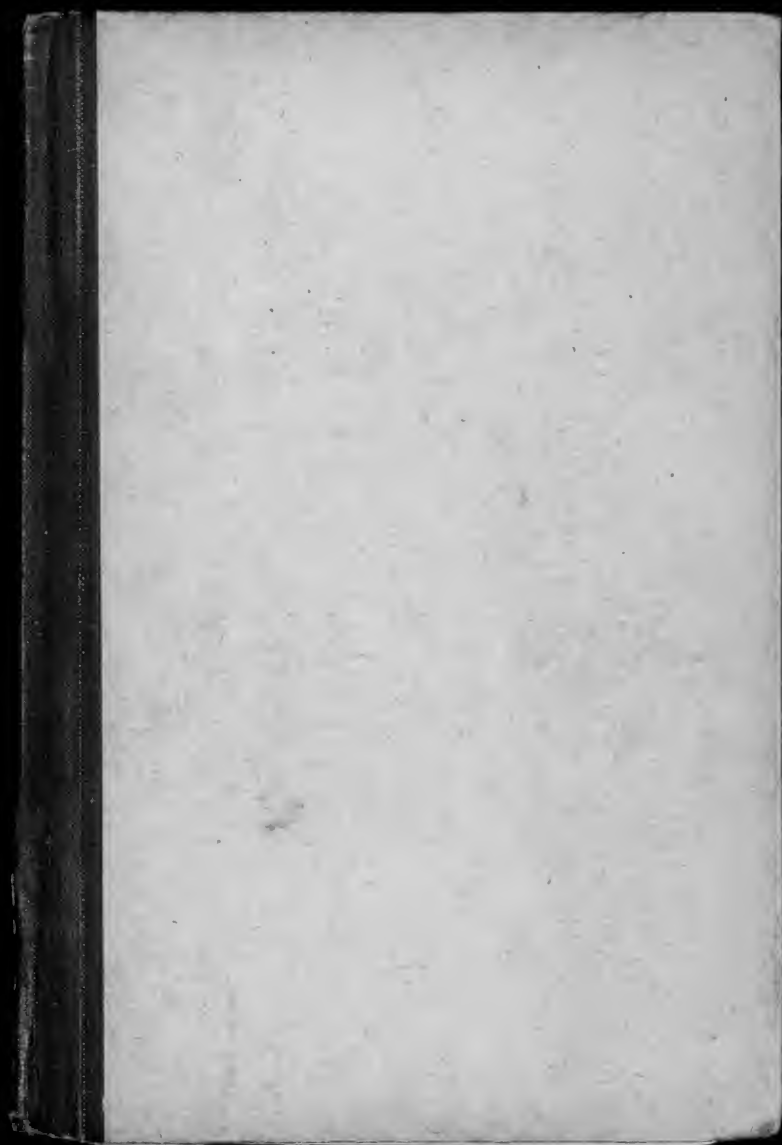
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SOPHOCLES:
PHILOCTETES.

A TRANSLATION.

BY

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SOPHOCLES:
PHILOCTETES.

A TRANSLATION.

ODYSSEUS.

THIS is the shore of the sea-girt land of Lemnos, by men
untrodden and without inhabitant, where, long ago, O thou
who art born of a sire passing noble among the Hellenes,
son of Achilles, Neoptolemus, I put ashore the Malian,
Pocas' son (charged so to do by the ruling chiefs) his foot all
festered with a consuming sore; when neither to libations
nor offerings of incense could we set our hands in peace, but
with his wild ill-omened cries he ever filled all the host,
shouting, groaning. Nay, what need to speak of that?
Verily, it is high time for brief speech, lest he even learn
that I am come and I spoil the whole plan whereby methinks
I shall straightway take him. Lo, now at length, it is thy
task to render service in what remains and to search out
where there is in these parts a cave with twain mouths
such, that there in the cold season is found a seat beneath
the sun on the either side, while in summer a breeze sends
slumber through the tunnelled chamber. And a little below,
upon the left, perchance thou wilt see a spring of water, if
it be not dry. Thereunto, I pray thee, approach in silence
and make known whether he is still dwelling nigh this self-
same spot, or whether he is haply elsewhere, that so for what
remains of my sayings, thou mayst give ear while I may
speak, and joint effort may come from both of us.

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NEOPTOLEMUS.

26. King Odysseus, the task thou biddest lies full near at hand; ay, methinks I see such a cavern as thou hast spoken of.

ODYS. Above or below? Nay, I do not see it.

NEOP. Here, high above; yea, and there is no sound of footfall.

ODYS. See that he be not haply retired to sleep within.

NEOP. I see an empty dwelling and not a man therein.

ODYS. And is there not within some comfort meet for a home?

NEOP. Yes, a trampled heap of leaves, as of one dwelling there.

ODYS. But is all desolate, and nought beneath the roof?

NEOP. Nay, a cup of rough wood, the work of some sorry craftsman, and yon tinder-stuff withal.

ODYS. To him belongs this store thou tellest of.

NEOP. Ah!—Yes, and here besides are set to dry some rags filled with noxious purulence.

40. ODYS. The man dwells in these places, clearly, and is somewhere not far distant; for how could a man with his foot diseased by that long-standing plague go to a distant spot? Nay, he has either gone forth in quest of sustenance, or of some soothing herb, perchance, that he knows of somewhere. Therefore send thy attendant to keep sure watch, lest he come upon me unawares; inasmuch as he would choose rather to take me than the all Argives.

NEOP. So, he is going and the path shall be watched. But if thou desirest aught, proceed with thy tale again.

ODYS. Son of Achilles, in the task on which thou hast come thou must be a true man, not with thy body alone; and if thou shouldst hear some strange new thing, plans thou hast not heard tell of ere this, thou must render service therein, for thou art here to serve.

NEOP. What is thy behest?

54. ODYS. Thou must beguile the soul of Philoctetes by thy words as thou speakest with him. Whenever he asks thee

who and whence thou art, thou must say, the son of Achilles: this must not be falsely told; but thou art sailing homeward, and hast left the fleet of the Achaeans, having come to hate them with a great hatred; for they, having stirred thee with prayers to set forth and come from home, knowing no way but this of capturing Ilium, deemed thee unworthy of Achilles' arms, so that they would not give them to thee at thy coming, though thou didst rightfully claim them,—but they handed them over to Odysseus;—saying all thou dost please against me, the deepest of deep curses. In nothing of this wilt thou cause me pain. But if thou shalt not do this task, thou wilt bring sorrow on all the Argives. For if this man's bow be not taken, thou canst not sack the land of Dardanus. Now that thine intercourse with him may be free and confidential while mine may not, learn thus. Thou hast sailed under oath to no man, nor by compulsion, nor as one of the first expedition, but nought of these things can I deny. (75) Therefore if he shall perceive me while he holds his bow, I shall perish at once, and thee too I shall bring to utter ruin with me. Nay, just this point needs to be skilfully devised, how thou mayst steal the invincible arms. I well know that by nature too thou are not apt to speak such things, nor to make guileful devices. Yet, inasmuch as victory is a sweet prize to win, bend thy heart to it; and hereafter our integrity shall be made manifest. But at this present give thyself unto me for a few shameless hours, and after that for all time to come be called the most godly of all mortals.

86. NEOP. Son of Laertes, the deeds whereof I should with sorrow bear the name I loathe to put in action; for I was not born to act in aught by evil craft, nor I myself, nor, as men say, my sire. But I am ready to take the man by force and not by fraud; for with but one foot to use, he will not in strength prevail over us who are so many. And yet, having been sent as thy co-worker I am loth to be called a traitor; but I am fain, O king, in doing right to miss my point rather than to conquer by wrong.

ODYS. Son of noble sire, I too erstwhile, when young, had a slow tongue but a busy hand; but now as I go forth

× to make proof I see among men words, not deeds, leading the way in all things.

NEOP. What then dost thou bid me but to lie?

ODYS. I bid thee take Philoctetes by guile.

NEOP. But why must I bring him with guile rather than by suasion?

ODYS. He will never be persuaded; and by force thou canst not take him.

NEOP. Has he some strength so dread that gives him confidence?

ODYS. Arrows inevitable and sending death before them.

106. NEOP. So then one may not dare even to approach him?

ODYS. No,—unless indeed by taking him with guile, as I bid thee.

× NEOP. Then thou thinkest it no shame to lie?

× ODYS. No,—if the lie brings deliverance.

NEOP. With what face then shall one bend his heart to utter these words?

ODYS. Whenever thou doest aught for gain it is not meet to shrink.

NEOP. Nay, what gain is it to me that he should come to Troy?

ODYS. Only these arrows can take Troy.

NEOP. Am I not then the destined destroyer, as ye were wont to say?

ODYS. Nor couldst thou without these, nor they without thee.

NEOP. Then they would be worth winning, if it stands thus.

ODYS. Yes; be assured that by doing this thou art winning two prizes.

NEOP. What are they? for when I learn I will not refuse the deed.

ODYS. Thou wilt be called at once wise and good in thy single person.

NEOP. Come what may, I will do it, casting off all shame.

ODYS. Dost thou remember then the counsels I gave thee?

NEOP. Be sure of that, when once I have consented.

ODYS. Do thou then abiding here await him; and I will depart, lest I be observed with thee, and will send our watcher back again to the ship.

126. NEOP. And if ye seem to me to be lingering at all beyond the proper time, I will send this same man back hither once again, disguising his form like a ship's captain's, that secrecy may help us; and then, my son, as he tells his cunning tale, do thou take the hints that profit thee in his words from time to time. And I will hie me to the ship, trusting this task to thee; and may Hermes the escorter, full of devices, lead us, with Victory, even Athena Polias, who saves me ever.

CHORUS.

What is meet, ah, what is meet for me, my lord, a stranger in a strange land, to hide, or what to say in dealing with a man full of suspicions? Make plain to me. Verily his skill all other skill excels, and so his wisdom, by whom the divine sceptre given by Zeus is swayed. And to thee, my son, hath come this perfect power *primaeval*; wherefore tell me what service I should do for thee?

144. NEOP. Now, since haply thou art fain to behold the place where he lies on the borders of the plain, gaze boldly; but whenso he comes, that dread wayfarer, from yon dwelling, coming forward ever at my beck, try to serve the need of the occasion.

CHOR. Of what has been long a care to me thou speakest, O King, that mine eye should watch for thine especial need; and now tell me in what manner of caverns he dwells and at what spot he is. For it were not unreasonable that I should learn (lest he come upon me unawares from some quarter) what is his place, or what his abode, where he is now setting his footsteps, at home or abroad.

NEOP. Thou seest his dwelling here with double entrance, its chamber in the rock.

CHOR. Where is hapless man himself abroad?

162. NEOP. It is plain to me that in quest of sustenance he is trailing his footsteps whereabouts somewhere near. For this is the manner of life that rumour saith he hath,

wretchedly shooting prey, poor wretch, with his winged arrows; nor does any healer of his woe draw nigh unto him.

CHOR. I pity him, thinking how, with none among mortals caring for him, and seeing no friendly face, in sadness and loneliness evermore, he is suffering from a fierce disease, and is in perplexity at every need as it arises. How ever, ah! how can he endure in his misery? O strange devices of men! O hapless races of mortals, whose lot misses the due mean! (179) This man, this man perchance of highborn ancestry inferior to none, shareless of all things in life, lies alone, apart from other men, with dappled or shaggy beasts, and pitiable alike in his agonies and hunger, with cares too grievous to be healed. And the ever-babbling echo, appearing from afar, the echo of his bitter wailing is still abiding nigh.

NEOP. None of these things is marvellous to me; for by heaven's command, if I also have aught of wisdom, both his former woes came upon him from cruel-hearted Chryse, and the sufferings he now hath with none to attend him, it cannot be but he hath them by the providence of some god, that he should not aim the god's invincible shafts at Troy, ere yet this time has expired, when it is said Troy needs must by those weapons fall.

201. CHOR. Peace, peace, my son!

NEOP.

What is this?

CHOR. A footfall was plainly heard, such as is habitual with a man in wearying pain, either here methinks or hereabouts. There falls, there falls upon my ear the voice—nor can I mistake it—the voice of one who creeps with painful step, and there doth not escape me his heavy moan from afar, that thrills the heart; for right clear is the cry of wailing.

CHOR. Nay, take, my son,—

NEOP.

Say, what?

CHOR.

New counsels;

for the man is not far off, but near, not with the reed-pipe's note, like shepherd whose home is in the fields, nay, either as he stumbles, maybe, for sheer pain he shrieks out a far-sounding cry, or as he gazes upon the anchorage

that giveth welcome to no ship. Ay, verily dread is his shrieking.

Enter Philoctetes.

PHILOCTETES.

219. Ho! strangers, who can ye be that with the oarage of your ships have put into this land, where is neither good harbour, nor inhabitants? Of what country or race shall I be right in naming you? Your appearance speaks of the garb of Hellas, land passing dear to me; but I would fain hear your speech; and do not shrink in terror affrighted at me in this wild state, but having compassion on one so sad, so solitary, so desolate, so friendless in his hour of need, speak, if indeed ye have come hither as friends. Make answer, I pray you; for it is not fitting that I should fail of this from you, nor you from me.

232. NEOP. Then, stranger, know this first, that we are Hellenes; since this thou art fain to learn.

PHIL. O passing welcome speech! Ah, to think that I should really have received a greeting from such a man after long lapse of years. What quest brought thee to land and led thee to me? What purpose? Which of the winds most welcome? Plainly tell me all this, that so I may know who thou art.

NEOP. I am by birth of sea-girt Scyros; but I am sailing homewards; and my name is Neoptolemus, Achilles' son. Now thou knowest all.

PHIL. O son of father passing well-beloved, of well-beloved land, O nursling of old Lyncædes, on what enterprise didst thou come to this land, and whence art thou sailing?

NEOP. Well, if thou must know, at this present I am voyaging from Ilium.

PHIL. How sayest thou? Nay, of a surety thou wast not a sailor in our fleet at the beginning of our voyage to Ilium.

NEOP. Can it be that thou also hadst a share in that toil?

PHIL. O my son, what? knowest thou whom thou seest in me?

250. NEOP. Why, how should I know, for surely I have never yet beheld thee?

PHIL. Nay, hast thou not even heard my name, nor any rumour of my woes, whereby I was perishing?

NEOP. Know that I know nothing of the things whereof thou enquirest.

PHIL. O passing wretched was I, O hated of Heaven, since not so much as a rumour of this my condition ever seems to have come to my home, no, not even to any corner of Hellas. Nay, those men having cast me out unrighteously are laughing in silence, while my disease is ever strong and waxing worse. O my son, O boy whose sire is Achilles, see, I am that man, of whom perchance thou hast heard as being the master of Heracles' weapons, the son of Poeas, Philoctetes, whom those twain chieftains and the king of the Caphallenians cast forth in shameful wise thus desolate, pining away with fierce disease, smitten by the destroying viper's murderous bite; and with this disease, my son, they put me out here thus desolate and were gone—what time from sea-bound Chryse they put in hither with their armament of ships. (271) Then glad were they when they saw me after long tossing on the sea asleep upon the shore within a sheltering cavern: they left me and were gone, having set forth a few rags, as for a man in hapless misery, and some small pittance of food also;—may such be theirs! Prithee, my son, when they had gone, with what kind of an awakening thinkest thou I arose from slumber then? How thinkest thou I made lament? How groaned over my woes? For I saw the ships, wherewith I started on my voyage, all gone, and no man in the place, no one to help me, no one to bring aid for my disease as I suffered; but surveying all things I could find nothing nigh but pain, and of that abundant store, my son. Well, then! I found the time went passing month by month, and needs must I beneath this little roof in loneliness attend upon myself. My hunger's needs this bow was wont to find, hitting the winged wood-pigeons; and whatever my shaft sped from the string might strike for me, to that poor I all alone would crawl, in wretchedness dragging on my foot to that; and if need were to take some drink as well,

and, the frost being out, as in winter, to break some fire-wood, creeping forth poor I would manage that; and lastly, fire would be lacking, but by hard rubbing of stone on stone, I would with toil make visible the hidden spark, which also gives me life evermore. For verily a shelter to dwell in, if fire be there, provides all things except my release from disease. (300) Come, O my son, now learn too the tale of this island. No sailor comes near here if he can help it; for there is no anchorage, no port to which a man shall sail and make gain in merchandise, or meet a welcome. Not here do the voyages of wise men tend. Well! haply one hath put in against his will; for many such haps might come in the long years of a man's life. These, whenever they come, my son, in words show pity on me, and no doubt give me as well even some share of food in their compassion, or some raiment; but this thing, whenever I call it to mind, no one is willing to do, even to bring me safe home; no, I am perishing in misery, for now the tenth year amid hunger and woes, the prey of this sateless disease. So evilly have the Atridae and mighty Odysseus entreated me, O my son, and may the Olympian gods one day give them to suffer woes in requital for mine.

CHOR. Methinks I too pity thee as much as the strangers who have come, O son of Poeas.

NEOP. And I too am myself a witness in the case of these words; that they are true I know, for the Atridae and mighty Odysseus, I have found evil men.

PHIL. What! hast thou too some ground of complaint against those murderous men, so that thy wrath is stirred by suffering?

NEOP. May it be mine to sate my wrath with my hand one day, that so Mycenae may know, and Sparta, that Seyros too hath been the mother of brave men.

PHIL. Well said, my son; now on what matter hast thou come hither, charging them with this great anger-stirring wrong?

NEOP. O son of Poeas, I will tell thee all,—yet hardly can I tell,—all that I suffered of outrage by their hands at my coming. Now when fate came upon Achilles that he should die,—

PHIL. Ah, woe! Tell me no more, till I first learn this: is the son of Poleus dead?

NEOP. Dead, by no mortal's stroke, but by the god's, shot by an arrow, as men say, vanquished by Phoebus' will.

PHIL. Well, noble was the slayer and the slain, but I am in perplexity, my son, as to whether I shall enquire of thy suffering first, or mourn for him.

NEOP. Methinks for thee even thine own woes are enough, poor sufferer, without mourning those of thy neighbours.

PHIL. Thou sayest the truth. Therefore tell me once again thy trouble, wherein they outraged thee.

NEOP. There came for me in a vessel gaily decked goodly Odysseus and the foster-father of my sire, saying either truly or maybe indeed falsely) that it was against Destiny's decree, now that my father had perished, for another than me to take the citadel. Bespeaking me thus, O stranger, they stayed me no long while from setting sail with speed, first and foremost through my love for the dead, that I might see him yet unburied—for I had not seen him—next however, their promise was fair, if I should go and take the citadel that towers above Troy. And it was now the second day of my voyage, when with favouring course I was coming to port at Sigeum fraught with woe for me; and straightway as I landed the whole host around began to greet me, swearing they saw their dead Achilles living again. (359) So then he was lying dead; but I, hapless I, when I had wept over him, after brief space coming to the Atreidae as friends, since that was but reasonable, demanded my father's arms and all else that was his. But they made, woe's me! a most shameless speech: 'Seed of Achilles, thou mayst take to thyself all else of thy sire's; but his famous arms another man possesses now, Laertes' son. And with starting tears I straightway sprang up in grievous wrath, and in my sore pain I said: 'O wretch! And have ye had the heart to give to any one, instead of me, the arms which were mine, ere learning my will? Then spake Odysseus—for he chanced to be hard by—'Yea, my son, they have with justice given these to me, for I was near and saved both them and him.' And I was angered, and straightway

began to lash them with evil words of every kind, and made no sparing, should that man rob me of my arms. And having come to this pass, though not of evil temper, he was stung with wrath, and thus made answer to what he had heard. "Thou wast not where we were, nay, thou wast afar, where thou shouldst not have been. (380) And with yonder weapons, since thou dost venture to talk so boldly, thou shalt never sail away to Seyros." Having heard words like these, and foully insulted, I am sailing toward home, reft of mine own by that passing base, base-born, Odysseus. And yet I do not blame him so much as those in authority. For a city has its being wholly from its rulers and so also an army; and they that are unruly among men come to be base through the words of their teachers. All my tale is told. May he who hates the Atreidae be the friend of the gods in like degree as he is mine.

CHOR. Thou that reignest on the hills, all-nourishing Earth, Mother of Zeus himself, who dost possess the mighty Pactolus rich in gold, there also, dread mother, I was wont to call upon thee, what time all the scorn of the Atreidae was coming upon this man's head, when they wrongly gave his father's arms (hear, blest goddess, mounted on bull-slaughtering lions), to the son of Laertius a peerless glory.

402. PHIL. With sorrow's clear token of friendship, meseems, O strangers, ye have sailed unto us, and your tale accords with mine, so that I recognise that these deeds come from the Atreidae and Odysseus. For I am well aware that he would give tongue to any base pretext or wickedness, if he were sure to work therefrom in the end some iniquity. Nay, at this I marvel not, but rather that the elder Ajax, supposing he was there, could brook the sight of this.

NEOP. He was no longer living, O stranger; else I had never been plundered thus had he been but alive.

PHIL. How sayest thou? And so he too is dead and gone?

NEOP. Think of him as being no longer in the light.

PHIL. Ah, woe is me! But the son of Tydeus and the child of Sisyphus bought by Laertes, they will not die. Of course, for they should not be living.

NEOP. Not dead; be sure at least of that; nay, they are flourishing full greatly now in the Argive host.

421. PHIL. But what of him who is my old and worthy friend, Nestor of Pylus? For he was wont to hold in check their evil purposes, by prudent counselling.

NEOP. Yes, he now fares ill, for dead and gone is Antiochus, his son that was.

PHIL. Ah! woe is me! In those few words thou tellest me grievous news of two, of whose death I had least desired to hear. Alas! alas! What must we look for further, now that they are dead, but Odysseus lives, and at this special time when he ought in their stead to be called a corpse?

NEOP. A cunning foe is he, but even cunning schemes are thwarted oftentimes.

PHIL. Come, tell me in Heaven's name, where was Patroclus at this crisis that he failed thee, he who was thy father's dearest friend?

NEOP. He too was dead; and in brief tale I would tell thee about this. War never willingly takes an evil man, but ever the good.

PHIL. I bear thee witness; and on that very principle I will question thee about a man, worthless, 'tis true, yet clever and cunning of tongue, how he now fares.

441. NEOP. And who but indeed Odysseus is this man thou wilt speak of?

PHIL. Not of him did I speak, but there was one Thersites, who never used to choose to speak but once, when all forbade his speaking: dost know whether he happens to be living?

NEOP. I did not see him, but I heard that he is still living.

PHIL. Of course; for no evil thing yet perished; no, the gods well protect evil things, and in some strange fashion delight to send back from Hades the knavish and froward, while the just and the good they ever banish from life. What am I to think of these things, and how praise them, when praising the works of the gods, I find the gods are evil?

NEOP. Son of Oetaean sire, for me, from this time henceforth looking from afar upon Ilium and the Atridae, I will stand my guard; and where the worse man waxes

greater than the good, and righteousness perishes while the cunning man has the mastery, such men as these I will never love. Nay, rocky Scyros shall be fully sufficient for me in days to come, that so I may rejoice therein as my home. (461) And now I will away to my ship. And thou, O son of Poeas, fare thee well, farewell; and may the gods set thee free from thy disease, as thou thyself desirest. But let us go; that so at whatever hour the god permits our voyage, at that hour we may start.

PHIL. Son, do ye start at once?

NEOP. Yes, the hour calls us to watch for a sailing wind not far off rather than near at hand.

PHIL. Then by thy father, and by thy mother, O my son, and by aught that is dear to thee at home, as a suppliant I entreat thee, leave me not thus lonely, desolate amid these dire woes thou seest and the manifold woes thou hast heard that I dwell with; nay, take me as one more to thy crew. The noisomeness, I know it well, is great when such the freight; yet bear with it. To noble natures the base is hateful, while righteousness is full of glory. So thine, if thou desertest me, will be reproach full shameful, but if thou perform the task, my son, great guerdon of glory, should I come alive unto the land of Oeta. Come thou: it is the toil of not one whole day. (481) Bend thy will to it, cast me where thou wilt, but take me, into the hold, the prow, the stern, where I shall give least trouble to the crew. Consent thou, in the name of Zeus' self, the god of suppliants, O my son, be persuaded. I fall upon my knees to thee, though I am feeble, poor I, and lame. Nay, cast me not away thus lonely, afar from footfall of men; but either bring me with thee in safety to thine home, or to Chalcodon's dwellings in Euboea, and thence it will be no long voyage for me to Oeta and the ridge of Trachis and fair-flowing Spercheus, that so thou mayst show me to my beloved sire, of whom I have now long since feared lest to my sorrow he may be departed. For oft by means of those who came hither used I to send to him with message of entreating prayers, that he would send for me with a vessel of his own and set me safe at home. But either he is dead or my messengers, as might, methinks, have been expected,

making small account of my interest, hastened on their homeward voyage. But now, since I have come to thee as at once my escort and my messenger, do thou save me, do thou have compassion on me, beholding how all things are by fate full of dread and danger for mortals that they may be prosperous one moment and come to grief the next. (504) But it is meet that he who stands clear of ill-fortune should be wary of dangers, and whosoever one lives in happiness, that is the time when he should keep most careful watch upon his way of life lest he perish utterly unawares.

CHOR. Have pity, O king; he has told of the struggles brought by many intolerable sufferings; so many may no one of my friends fall in with. But if, O King, thou hatest the ruthless Atridae, turning their base deed to this man's gain, I would bring him on thy goodly swift ship to the home where he longs to go, escaping so the after-wrath of the gods.

NEOP. Beware lest now thou art here of pliant mood, but when thou hast had thy fill of this disease by abiding with it, then thou show thyself no longer at one with these words of thine.

CHOR. Nay, nay. Thou shalt never have cause with justice to cast that reproach at me.

524. NEOP. But still it were shame that I should show myself less ready than thou art to serve the stranger at his need. Nay, if so please thee, let us sail, let him set forth speedily; for our ship will carry him and will not refuse. Only may the gods bring us safe from this land, and hence to the land whereto we wish to sail.

PHIL. O day most dear to me, O most delightful friend, and ye welcome mariners, would that I might make manifest to you in very deed, how friendly unto you ye have made me. Let us go, O my son, after bidding farewell to my homeless home within, that thou mayst also learn by what means I managed to support life, and how stout of heart I was. For I think that none other man save me would endure to take a mere glance at these sufferings; but I of sheer necessity was schooled by degrees to acquiesce in my afflictions.

CHOR. Stay, let us learn: lo! two men are coming, the one a sailor from thy ship, the other a stranger; first learn of them and then go in.

Enter Merchant and Sailor.

542. MERC. Son of Achilles, this my fellow-voyager, who with two others formed the watch on board thy ship, I bade to tell me where thou mightest haply be, since I had fallen in with thee, not so purposing, but by some chance having come to anchor off the same land. Sailing, as a merchant, with no great outfit, from Ilium homewards to vine-clad Peparethus, when I was told that the sailors had all voyaged under thy command, I resolved not to make my voyage in silence, ere I should tell unto thee my message and win the due reward. Of course thou knowest nothing of thine own affairs, what new purposes the Argives have concerning thee, and not purposes merely, but deeds that are being done and no longer left undone.

NEOP. Verily, stranger, the kindness of thy forethought, as I am a gentleman, shall be stored up in thy favour. But tell me all thy meaning, that I may learn what strange purpose on the part of the Argives thou hast to tell me.

561. MERC. There are gone forth pursuing thee with a fleet of ships the aged Phoenix and the sons of Theseus.

NEOP. To bring me back by force or by their words?

MERC. I know not. I come to bring thee the tidings that I heard.

NEOP. Can Phoenix and his fellow-voyagers be working at this task so zealously for the sake of the Atridae?

MERC. Know that the task is being done and lingering no longer.

NEOP. How was it, then, that Odysseus was not ready to go on this errand and bear the tidings in person? Did some fear hinder him?

MERC. Oh, he and the son of Tydeus were setting out in quest of another man when I put out to sea.

NEOP. What manner of man might he be after whom Odysseus himself was sailing?

MERC. There was one . . . but tell me first who yonder man is; and what thou sayest speak not aloud.

NEOP. Stranger, in him thou seest the famous Philoctetes.

MERC. Then ask me not the rest, but with all speed set sail and take thyself off from this land.

PHIL. What says he, O my son? Why ever does that sailor traffic with thee about me in darkling words?

580. NEOP. I know not yet what he says; but he must say openly what he will say to me and thee and these.

MERC. O seed of Achilles, do not charge me before the army with saying what I ought not; many are the kindly returns I receive at their hands for doing such kindnesses as a poor man can.

NEOP. I am the Atridae's foe; and this man is my greatest friend, for that he hates the Atridae. Thou shouldest not now, if thou hast come with kindly intent towards me, hide from us one word of the news thou hast heard.

MERC. Beware what thou dost, my son.

NEOP. I have long been on the watch.

MERC. I will hold thee responsible.

NEOP. Do so, but speak.

MERC. I consent. It is in pursuit of this man that these two whom I told thee of—Tydeus' son and great Odysseus are sailing straitly sworn that they will bring thee either by persuasion of their words or by sheer force. Ay, and all the Achaeans were listening as Odysseus (for his boldness was greater than the other's) plainly asserted that he would do this deed.

598. NEOP. But wherefore after so long a lapse of time did the Atridae turn their regard to this man, whom they had kept now long in exile? What is this desire that has come upon them, or what mighty impulse and vengeance from the gods who requite sinful deeds?

MERC. I will explain all that to thee—as thou hast perchance not heard it. There was a certain seer, nobly born, a son of Priam, and he was called by the name of Helenus; whom this man going forth by night alone, crafty Odysseus, of whom all shameful and insulting words are spoken, took prisoner; and, leading him bound, made display of him publicly before the Achaeans as a goodly prize. And

thereupon he prophesied to them all else besides and chiefly that they should never sack the crowning citadel of Troy, unless by persuasion of their speech they should bring this man from this island, whereon he is now dwelling. And when Laertes' son heard the seer speak thus, he straightway made a promise that he would bring this man and show him to the Achaeans; it was like, he thought, as a captive by his own consent, but should he refuse, without it: and should he fail of this he offered his head to any one who wished to cut off. Thou hast heard all, my son: but I counsel speed for thee and for any man concerning whom thou hast regard.

622. PHIL. Ah! woe is me. Can it be that he, that utter pest, has sworn that he will bring me by persuasion to the Achaeans? Verily, I shall as soon be persuaded when dead to come up even from Hades to the light, as his father did.

MERC. I know not of this. Nay, I will go to my ship, and may Heaven help you with every blessing.

PHIL. Is not this strange, my son, that the son of Laertes should ever have hoped that by winning words he would lead me from his ship and show me in the midst of the Argives? Never! sooner would I hearken to the bitterness of my foes—the viper that hath made me thus halt of foot. But he would say anything, he would dare anything. Even now I know that he will come. But let us go, my son, that wide expanse of sea may part us from Odysseus' ship. Let us away. Speed in due season brings sleep and rest, when toil is over.

NEOP. Well, then, when the head-wind falls, in that hour we will set forth; at present it is full against us.

PHIL. It is alway fair sailing, whenever thou art fleeing from evil.

NEOP. Nay, but this wind is adverse to them also.

PHIL. No wind is adverse to pirates, when there is an opportunity of stealing, and plundering by force.

NEOP. Well, if it be thy purpose, let us go, when thou hast taken from within what thou needest and desirest most of all.

PHIL. Well, some things I do need, though the choice is small.

Ph.

NEOP. What is there that is not on board my ship?

PHIL. There is by me a certain herb, wherewith I can always best assuage this sore, so as to lull its pain entirely.

NEOP. Well, bring it forth. Why, what else besides art thou eager to take?

PHIL. Any one of these arrows that may have been overlooked and slipped away from me, that I leave them not for any man to take.

NEOP. What! is this the renowned bow that thou holdest?

PHIL. This, for it is none other, this that I bear in my hands.

NEOP. Is it lawful that I might even take a near view of it, and hold it in my hands and salute it as a god?

PHIL. Yea, to thee, my son, both this boon shall be granted, and aught else of mine that may advantage thee.

NEOP. Ay, verily I am longing to,—but my longing stands thus,—were it lawful for me, I fain would; but if not, let it pass.

PHIL. Thou speakest reverently, my son, and it is lawful; for thou alone hast given to me to look upon the light of life, to see the land of Oeta, mine aged father, my friends, and thou, when I was trodden under foot of my foes, didst set me up out of their reach. Take heart: this bow shall be thine both to touch and to give again to me who gave it, and to make thy vaunt that for thy worth's sake thou alone of mortals has set thine hand upon it; for it was by deeds of kindness that I myself also won it. It brings me no sorrow that I have seen thee and won a friend in thee. For he who knows how to return one good turn for another, would prove a friend beyond all price.

NEOP. Prithee, pass in.

PHIL. Yes, and I will lead thee in. For my affliction sorely needs to have thee as a helpmate.

CHOR. I have heard tell, though I never saw, how the almighty son of Cronos cast bound upon a whirling wheel him who erst approached too near the bed of Zeus. But I have not heard of by hearsay, nor have I beheld, any other mortal who had met with a wofuller doom than this man, for he

had nor wronged nor robbed any one, but, a just man among just men, he was perishing here all undeservedly. (688) At this I marvel how, ah! how, as he listened in loneliness to the breakers dashing around him, however he held fast a life so full of tears: where he was his only neighbour, without power to walk, without any one in the land for a friend in his need, in whose ear he might lament with wailing that met response the fiercely gnawing, bleeding ulcer;—none to lull the pain of the fevered flux, oozing from the sores in his envenomed foot, with healing herbs, whenever the bleeding came on, or to take them from the foodful earth. (701) For he would creep now this way and now that with writhing frame, like as a child without its kindly nurse, to any place where was provision for his needs, so often as the consuming anguish abated, taking not up for food the sown produce of holy earth, nor of aught else, that we earth-nourished mortals enjoy, except if haply with his winged swift-smiting bow he found sustenance of winged creatures to sate his hunger. O miserable his life, who knew not even the wine-cup's joy by the space of ten years, but ever wended his way to any standing pool wherever he could discern one as he looked eagerly around. / But now, having met a son of noble sires, he shall at last after this be blessed and mighty; for he is like to bear him on sea-traversing ship, in the fulness of many months, to his father's home beside the banks sacred to the Malian nymphs and Spercheius, where the hero of the brazen shield drew near to all the gods, blazing with fire from heaven, above the heights of Oeta.

730. NEOP. Come, if thou wilt. And why now, without any cause, standest thou so silent and astonished?

PHIL. Ah! ah! ah! ah!

NEOP. What is the matter?

PHIL. Nothing to alarm thee; prithee go on, my son.

NEOP. Art thou in pain from the disease that abides with thee?

PHIL. No, indeed not; no, I think it is better just now. Ye gods!

NEOP. Why dost thou groan and call upon thy gods?

PHIL. That they may come to us with power to save and heal. Ah! ah! ah! ah!

NEOP. What ails thee? Wilt refuse to tell, but thus keep silence? Thou hast clearly fallen in some sickness.

PHIL. I am undone, my son, and shall not avail to hide my pain from you. Oh! it pierces me, it pierces me. Ah! hapless, miserable me! I am undone, my son; it devours me, my son. [*He gasps in agony.*] In Heaven's name, if thou hast a sword by thee ready to thy hand, smite thou my heel, lop it off at once; spare not my life; come, quick, my son.

751. NEOP. What new thing is this that cometh so suddenly, by reason of which thou makest this loud wailing and lament over thyself?

PHIL. Thou knowest, my son.

NEOP. What is it?

PHIL. Thou knowest, my son.

NEOP. What ails thee? I know not.

PHIL. Nay, of course thou knowest it. Oh! oh!

NEOP. Ah! dread is the burden of the disease.

PHIL. Yea, dread past telling. I pray thee pity me.

NEOP. What shall I do?

PHIL. Abandon me not through fear. Lo! this plague has come after an interval, when haply it had been sated with wandering abroad.

NEOP. Ho! wretched one, wretched indeed art thou shown to be by woe of every kind; and wouldst thou have me take hold of thee and touch thee?

PHIL. No, no—not that! but take this bow of mine, even as thou wert asking me but now, and until this present anguish of my disease abate, keep it in safe custody. For indeed slumber comes upon me, as soon as this pain departs; and it may not cease ere that: but thou shouldst leave me to sleep in peace. And should they come in the meantime, in Heaven's name I charge thee, nor willingly nor unwillingly, nor through any craft, give this bow up to them, lest thou prove the destroyer of thyself and me, who am thy suppliant.

774. NEOP. For my good will, fear not. The bow shall not be given to any man but me and thee: give it to me, and may blessings attend the gift.

PHIL. Lo, there! take it, my son. But do thou pray

unto envious Heaven that it prove not of manifold woe to thee, nor even as it proved to me and to him that possessed it before me.

NEOP. Ye gods, so be it unto both of us; and may our voyage be fair and happily sped, whithersoever the god deemeth right and our company is bound.

PHIL. But I fear, my son, lest thy prayer with regard to me be vain. For again, the dark blood, look thou, is dropping in oozy flux, and I look for some sudden change. Oh! alas! oh! oh! My foot, what evil wilt thou work on me? It is coming nigh, it is drawing near—see, close at hand. Ah! woe is me, hapless me. Ye know it now: flee not, oh, do not flee. Ah! ah! Oh, Cephallenian friend, would that this pain might seize thee, piercing right through thy breast! Ah! oh! (793) Ah me, yet once again! O ye twain chieftains, Agamemnon, Menelaus, would that in my stead for as long a time ye might bear this malady! Alas! Death, Death, when thou art called upon thus day by day, why canst thou never come? My son, brave heart, come, seize me, and in yonder fire of Lemnos, so often prayed for, do thou burn me, brave youth; know thou, I too of old deemed it right to do this to the son of Zeus for these arms which now thou hast in safe keeping. What sayest thou, my son? What sayest thou? Why art silent? Where chance thy thoughts to be?

NEOP. I have now long been pained with grief for the ills that beset thee.

PHIL. Come, my son, take heart withal: for this my pain comes sharply and speedily passes away. Nay, I beseech thee, leave me not alone.

NEOP. Be of good cheer: we will stay.

PHIL. And wilt thou stay?

NEOP. Deem thou that certain.

PHIL. Well, I do not claim to bind thee with an oath, my son.

NEOP. No, for it is not lawful for me to go without thee.

PHIL. Give me the pledge of thine hand.

813. NEOP. I give it, to stay.

PHIL. Thither—take me thither.

NEOP. Whither dost thou mean?

PHIL. Above.

NEOP. What is this raving again? Why art thou gazing on the orb of heaven above?

PHIL. Let me go—let me go.

NEOP. Whither am to let thee go?

PHIL. Let me go, I tell thee.

NEOP. I say I will not suffer thee.

PHIL. Thou wilt kill me, shouldst thou touch me.

NEOP. Well, I do let thee go, since thou art now of better mind.

PHIL. O earth, receive me in death, even as I am; for this agony no longer suffers me to stand upright.

NEOP. Meseems that sleep will take hold upon him within brief space; for, lo! his head is drooping backward; yes, see! drops of sweat are over all his body, and a dark vein of blood has broken forth from out his instep. Come, let us leave him, friends, in peace, that so he may fall on sleep.

CHOR. O sleep that knows no anguish, sleep that knows no pains, come, as we pray, with favouring breeze, O blest, blest King, and keep before his eyes this radiance that is spread before them now. (832) Come, come, I pray thee, with healing power. O my son, consider where thou wilt stop, and whither thou wilt go, and how stand my future counsels. Thou seest now. Why do we tarry in acting? Opportunity that hath the decision of all things wins great advantage by acting at once.

NEOP. Well, he indeed heareth nought, but I see that we hold his bow here for our plunder all in vain, if we sail without him. For unto him belongs the crown, him the god bade us bring. To boast of fruitless work which falsehood helped were foul shame.

CHOR. Nay, my son, to this the god shall look, but the sound of the words whereby thou answerest me utter soft, I pray thee, and low; since the sleep—that is no sleep—of all men in sickness is quick to see. (849) But to the best of thy power consider in thy secret heart how thou wilt accomplish this for me, even this, yes, 'thou knowest of whom I speak. If thou still retain thy present feeling

toward this man, be assured that prudent souls can see therein troubles full perplexing. Lo! my son, the wind is fair, is fair: sightless and without help the man lies stretched in the darkness—sleep in the sun is sound—having no power over hand, or foot, or any limb, but he seems like one who makes his bed with Hades. Look to it if thy words are timely. So far as my thought can comprehend, my son, the toil that frightens not is best.

NEOP. I bid you be silent, nor quit your senses. See, the man opens his eyes and lifts up his head.

PHIL. O light that follows sleep, and ye strangers whose watching hath been past my hope's belief. For never did I dream that thou wouldst have dared thus pityingly to wait upon my sufferings and join in helping me.

873. NEOP. Truly the Atrides, those brave generals, did not brook to endure this so patiently.

PHIL. But noble indeed is thy nature, and of noble breed, my son; thou hast made light of all this though sore vexed with that shrieking noisome plague. And now inasmuch as there seems to be after this suffering some forgetfulness and respite at length, my son, do thou raise me with thine own hand, do thou steady me, my son, that so, whenever the weariness shall let me go free, we may start for the ship and tarry not to sail.

NEOP. Now right glad am I to see thee beyond my hope living still and breathing, void of pain; for thy symptoms judged by thy present sufferings seems as of one no longer living. And now raise thyself; but if it be more welcome to thee, these men shall bear thee; for there will be no grudging of the trouble, since both thou and I are resolved to act thus.

PHIL. In this I thank thee, O my son, and do thou raise me up as thou dost purpose; but let these men alone, lest they be sickened with the noisome odour ere need be; enough for them the misery of living on board with me.

893. NEOP. It shall be so; but stand up and hold fast by me thyself.

PHIL. Take heart: my long familiar habit will give me power to rise.

NEOP. Ah me! what am I to do next?

PHIL. What is the matter, my son? Where hast thou strayed in thy speech?

NEOP. I know not what turn to give to the words that perplex me.

PHIL. And wherefore art thou perplexed? Speak not thus, my son.

NEOP. Nay, I am at that very point of this perplexing state.

PHIL. Surely the noisomeness of my disease hath not prevailed on thee to forgo taking me in thy ship?

NEOP. All is noisomeness, when a man forsaking his true nature does unseemly deeds.

PHIL. But surely thou nor dost nor sayest aught alien to thy sire's nature, in helping a brave man.

NEOP. I shall be proved base: this has long troubled me.

PHIL. Nay, not at least in thy deeds; but in thy words I see cause for fear.

NEOP. O Zeus, what am I to do? Am I to be a twice convicted villain, in hiding what I ought not as well as saying words of deepest shame?

PHIL. And if my judgment be not wrong, yon man, meseems, after betraying and forsaking me, will set forth on his voyage.

913. NEOP. Forsake thee! Nay, not I! Rather the fear lest to thy grief I give thee convoy, this has long troubled me.

PHIL. What canst thou mean, my son? For I do not understand.

NEOP. I will hide naught from thee: know, thou must sail for Troy to the Achaeans and the host of the Atridae.

PHIL. Ah, woe! What sayest thou?

NEOP. Lament not ere thou learnest.

PHIL. What lesson? What ever thinkest thou to do to me?

NEOP. First to save thee from this evil, and then to go with thee and ravage the plains of Troy.

PHIL. And dost thou mean indeed to do this?

NEOP. Sore necessity dictates this course; and therefore be not wroth at hearing it.

PHIL. I am undone—poor wretch—betrayed. What hast thou done to me, stranger? Give me back my bow at once.

NEOP. Nay, it may not be; for right and expediency bend me to hearken unto those in authority.

PHIL. O firebrand thou and utter terror, O hateful piece of cunning villainy! how hast thou treated me, how hast thou deceived me! And art thou not ashamed, thou wretch, to look upon me—who turned to thee for aid, who came to thee with prayers? Thou hast robbed me of my life by taking my bow. Give it back, I entreat thee, give it back, I beseech thee, my son. (933) In the name of thy fathers' gods take not my life from me. Ah, woe is me! Lo, he doth not even speak to me any more, but as if purposing never to give them up, even so he turns away his look. O ye havens and jutting crags, O ye haunts of mountain beasts, ye rocks that go sheer down, to you—I know none other to whom to speak—my wonted friends I wail the wrongs Achilles' son hath done unto me: he sware that he would take me hence to my home, but is taking me to Troy: he gave me too his right hand for a pledge, and hath taken from me and keeps the bow, the holy guerdon of Heracles, son of Zeus, and he is fain to show it himself unto the Argives. As though he had captured a strong man he takes me by force, and he wots not that he is slaying a corpse, or a vapour's shadow, a mere wraith. Nay, verily, were I strong he would not have captured me: nor, indeed, even as I am, save by fraud. But now I have been tricked, woe's me. What must I do? Nay, give it back. Now at last be thy true self again. What sayest thou? Why art silent? I am as naught, poor hapless I. (952) O cave with double entrance, again once more I will come towards thee unarmed, without sustenance; lo! I shall fade away in yon chamber alone, slaying no winged bird nor creature that roams the mountains with this bow: nay, I myself, hapless I, shall die and furnish a feast for those by whom I was fed, and those whom I used to chase erewhile shall now chase me. And, alas! I shall give my life as atonement for the life I have taken, and all through one who seemed to know no evil. Perish—nay, not yet, till I

learn if thou wilt even again change thy purpose: but if not, mayst thou die an evil death.

CHOR. What are we to do? It now rests with thee, O King, whether we set sail or comply with this man's words.

NEOP. Truly there has come upon me a strange pity for this man, not now for the first time, but even long ago.

PHIL. Have pity on me, O my son, in Heaven's name, and suffer not to pass among men a reproach against thyself for having deceived me.

NEOP. Ah me! what shall I do? Would that I had never quitted Scyros; so sorely am I oppressed by my present ills.

PHIL. Retire, thou wretch; thou seemest to have come schooled by base men in a lesson of shame. But now leave it to others whom it befits, and set sail, giving up my arms to me.

973. NEOP. What are we to do, my men?

Odysseus suddenly appears.

ODYS. Villain, what art thou doing? Stand back and give up this bow to me.

PHIL. Woe is me! who is the man? Do I hear Odysseus?

ODYS. Odysseus, be assured—ay, me, whom thou seest.

PHIL. Alas! I am trafficked away, undone. Yon man it was then, after all, who helped to capture me and rob me of my arms.

ODYS. I, be assured, none other. I avow it.

PHIL. Give back, give up to me, my son, the bow.

ODYS. This, at all events, not even if he be fain, shall he ever do; nay more, thou needs must come with it, or they will carry thee by force.

PHIL. Me, vilest and most daring villain, shall these men take me by force?

ODYS. Yes, if thou go not of thine own free will.

PHIL. O Lemnian land and yon all-powerful blaze of Hephaistus' fashioning, can this be borne, that yonder man should carry me off from thy borders by force?

ODYS. Zeus it is, to tell thee sooth, Zeus, that rules this land, Zeus, by whom this has been decreed: and I am his servant.

PHIL. O hated wretch, what cunning words thou canst invent! Taking gods for thy defence, thou makest those gods traitors.

993. ODYS. Nay, but true. And thou must go this journey.

PHIL. Never will I.

ODYS. Thou shalt: herein thou must obey.

PHIL. Ah! woe is me! Plainly, then, it was to slavery that my father begat me, and not to freedom.

ODYS. No, no! But to be equal with the bravest, with whom thou must take Troy and raze it to the ground.

PHIL. No, never! Not even though I needs must suffer every ill, while at least I have this beetling crag.

ODYS. But what wouldst thou do?

PHIL. Throw myself straightway from the rock above and dash my head upon the rock below.

ODYS. Ho! seize him. Let this not be in his power.

PHIL. O hands, how sorely are ye dealt with for lack of the bow-string that ye loved, by this man made fast prisoners. O thou who hast no healthy or noble thought, how hast thou yet again beguiled me, how hast thou ensnared me, taking for thy shelter this boy I knew not, too good to be thy companion, yet good enough for mine, who knew naught but to do his task, and he shows even now that he is sorely vexed at the wrongs he himself has done, and the wrongs I have suffered. (1013) But thy base soul that even seeth from secret places did school him well, though inapt and unwilling, to be clever in base deeds. And now, wretch, having bound me fast, dost think to carry me from this shore; wherein thou didst expose me, friendless, desolate, citiless, dead among living men. Alas! . . . Ruin seize thee! Yet often have I prayed that for thee. But since the gods grant nothing pleasant to me, thou livest in joy, while I am sore troubled at this very thing, that I live with many woes in misery, mocked at by thee and by those twain chieftains, Atreus' sons, whom thou art serving herein. And yet thou didst sail with them, brought under yoke by treachery and compulsion, while me unutterably wretched, though I had sailed of my free will as captain of seven ships,

they cast out in dishonour, as thou sayest, but they say *thou* didst the deed. And now why are ye taking me? Why do ye force me away with you? To what end? For I am nought, and dead to you long ago. (1031) How comes it, God-forsaken villain, that now I am not lame and noisome in thine eyes? How will ye vow, when I have sailed, to make burnt offerings; how to make libations any more? Since that was thy pretext for casting me forth. Ruin seize you, and it shall seize you for having wronged him who stands before you, if the gods set any store by justice. Yea, and well I know that they do: inasmuch as 'ye would never have sailed upon this quest for a poor wretch, were not some heaven-sent longing for me spurring you on. My fatherland and watchful gods, take vengeance, I pray, take vengeance, though late yet at last on every man of them, if ye feel any compassion even for me. For I live in pitiful estate, albeit should I see the ruin of those men, I should deem I had escaped from my disease.

CHOR. Wrathful is the stranger, and wrathful utterance makes he now, Odysseus, and it bows not before his woes.

1047. ODYS. I might say many things in answer to his words, had I the leisure; but now I can say but one thing. Where need is of such men, such am I; and where there is a test of just and good men thou wouldst not find any man more righteous than me. To win, I do confess, is everywhere my aim, save only with regard to thee. But for thee at this present I will of mine own accord make way. Release him, I say, and set hand upon him no more. Suffer him to stay. And we need not thee also, when we have these arms, for there is Teucer with us, who knoweth this craft, and I, who deem that no whit worse than thou I could wield this bow, and guide it straight with my hand. What need, then, is there of thee? Walk in thy Lemnos, and farewell. But let us go. And perchance thy prize will bring me honour which thou oughtest to possess.

PHIL. Ah, me! What shall I do in my hapless estate? Shalt thou, adorned with those arms of mine, show thyself among the Argives?

1065. ODYS. Not one word more, for I am going now.

PHIL. O son of Achilles, and shall I be addressed not even by thy voice, but wilt thou depart at once?

ODYS. Go thou: look not upon him, noble though thou art, lest thou ruin our success.

PHIL. What! shall I now be left by you also, strangers, thus desolate, and will ye not take pity on me?

CHOR. This youth is our commander. Whatsoever he bids thee, that we also say to thee.

NEOP. I shall be told by him [*points to Odysseus*] that I am by nature full of compassion. Yet abide here, if it be yon man's pleasure, some time,—until the sailors have made things ready on board and we have prayed to the gods, and he meanwhile may haply assume some better feeling towards us. So then we too must set forth; but do you, when we call, set forth with speed.

[*Exeunt Odysseus and Neoptolemus.*]

1081. PHIL. O cavern of hollow rock, now sultry hot, now icy cold, so I was destined despite my hopes, Ah me! never to leave thee, never, but even in death thou wilt be with me. Ah me! Ah me! Sad dwelling, filled so full with tokens of my pain, what hereafter shall be my daily portion? Where, whence shall I, poor miserable one, find hope of sustenance? Would that from heaven above timorous birds might come through the shrill wind, and make a prey of me; for my strength is no longer.

CHOR. Yes, thou thyself, thyself hast passed the sentence, ill-fated one: not by a mightier hand from another place art thou held in this estate: for, when it was in thy power to be wise, rather than the better fate thou didst choose to praise the worse.

1101. PHIL. O unhappy, unhappy then am I, and made a wreck by suffering; who from this time forth with no man by me in days to come must dwell here and pine away—Ah woe! Ah woe!—bringing home food no more, gaining it not by my winged shafts grasped in my stout hands; but the unforeseen and secret sayings of a guileful heart deceived me; and would that I might see him, who contrived this plot, with my anguish as his portion for so long a time.

CHOR. As a doom, a doom from heaven, have these woes

come upon thee; nay, not as treachery wrought by my hand. Launch thy baleful, inauspicious curse at others. For indeed, this is my care, that thou shouldst not thrust away my friendship.

1122. PHIL. Woe, woe is me! and so, sitting somewhere on the grey sea-shore, he laughs at me, in his hand brandishing the means of sustenance for my wretched life, that none else ever handled. Thou beloved bow, forced from my loving hands, surely if thou hast a heart to feel, thou lookest with pity upon me that shall use thee no more henceforth in the Heracleian exercise; nay, thou art plied in the new service of a man of many devices, looking upon shameful deceits, and that detested foe, who by shameful means makes countless evils arise, even all the woes that he has devised against us.

1140. CHOR. Verily it is the part of a man to say that what is good is righteous; but when he hath spoken not to send forth from his tongue rancorous bitterness. Now yon man, under orders of many, using this other as his minister, hath wrought public gain for his friends.

PHIL. My winged chase, ye tribes of wild-eyed beasts, that this place holds in its mountain wilds. Nevermore in your flight will ye draw me after you from my cave: for I bear not in my hands the stout shafts of old; O hapless am I now; lo! this place is full carelessly guarded, and has no longer any terror for you. Come, now is your opportunity with blood for blood to glut your maw at your pleasure on my discoloured flesh. Straightway shall I depart from life. For whence shall I find means of life? Who can thus live upon the breezes, no longer having power over aught of the many blessings that the life-giving earth provides?

1161. CHOR. In Heaven's name, if thou hast any regard for a stranger, draw near to thyself one who draws near to thee in all good-will. Nay, know, know well that it is thine to escape this scourge. Cruel indeed is it to be the prey of, nor hath it skill to endure, the countless woes wherewith it dwells.

PHIL. Again, again hast thou hinted at an old pain, thou kindest of all bygone visitors. Why hast thou ruined me? What hast thou done to me?

CHOR. What meanest thou in this?

PHIL. If thou didst hope to carry me to the Trojan land that I loathe.

CHOR. Yea, this I think the best course.

PHIL. Then leave me forthwith.

CHOR. Welcome to me, welcome is this thy bidding, and right willing am I so to do. Let us go, let us go to our several places in the ship.

PHIL. By Zeus who heareth curses, go not, I beseech you.

CHOR. Be calm.

PHIL. O strangers, stay, in Heaven's name.

CHOR. Why callest thou?

PHIL. Ah me! Ah me! O Heaven! O Heaven! I die in misery. O my foot, my foot, what shall I do with thee in days to come, unhappy that I am? Ye strangers, come, returning yet once more.

CHOR. And what to do, with purpose strangely altered from the former bidding, thou wast declaring to us.

PHIL. There is no cause for wrath if one who is tossing in a tempest of pain should speak even in frantic wise.

CHOR. Come, then, unhappy man, as we bid thee.

PHIL. Never, no, never; know that for sure, not even if the fiery lightning flash shall come and burn me with the blaze of its thunderbolt. Perish Ilium, and all beneath its walls who conspired to thrust away this foot of mine. I pray you, strangers, grant me just one prayer.

1203. CHOR. What wilt thou ask?

PHIL. A sword from somewhere, or an axe, or any weapon,—ye must bring me.

CHOR. Why, to help thee do what rash deed?

PHIL. I will lop off my head and all my limbs. For blood, for blood my soul thirsts now.

CHOR. Why, why is this?

PHIL. I seek my sire.

CHOR. Wherever wilt thou go?

PHIL. To Hades. For he is no longer in the light of day. My city, my fatherland, would that I might see thee, unhappy man that I was, who left thy holy stream, and came to help the Danaï my enemies; and now I am as nought.

CHOR. Long since should I have gone, and know thou, by

this have been near my ship, had not we seen Odysseus coming, and the son of Achilles wending his way hither towards us.

Enter Neoptolemus and Odysseus.

1222. ODYS. Wilt thou not tell me on what quest thou art coming back again in such eager haste?

NEOP. To undo the wrongs I did before.

ODYS. Strangely indeed thou speakest; but the wrong—what was it?

NEOP. What, obeying thee and all the host . . .

ODYS. What deed didst thou of deeds which it beseemed thee not to do.

NEOP. By base deceits and wiles I did ensnare a man.

ODYS. What man? Ah me! Surely thou art not purposing some strange act?

NEOP. Strange? In no wise; but to Poëas' son . . .

ODYS. What wilt thou do? How strange fear steals over me!

NEOP. . . . from whom I took this bow, to him once more. . . .

ODYS. O, Zeus! what dost thou mean to say? Surely thou thinkest not to give it him?

NEOP. Yes, for I had taken it by foul means, and not fairly.

ODYS. In Heaven's name, sayest thou this in mockery?

NEOP. Ay, if mockery it be to tell the truth.

ODYS. What sayest thou, son of Achilles? What mean thy words?

NEOP. Wilt thou have me repeat the same words twice and thrice?

ODYS. I could have wished not even to have heard them once.

1240. NEOP. Be well assured thou hast now heard all my meaning.

ODYS. There is one, yea, there is, who shall stay thy deed.

NEOP. What meanest thou? Who shall be the man to hinder me herein?

ODYS. The whole host of the Achæans, and among them I.

NEOP. Wise though thou be, thy words have no wisdom.

ODYS. But thou nor sayest nor dost purpose wise things.

NEOP. But if just, this is better than wise.

ODYS. And how is it just to give back again this bow which thou didst win by my counsels?

NEOP. Having done foul wrong, I will try to make amends.

ODYS. And fearest thou not the army of the Achæans in doing this?

NEOP. With justice on my side, I fear not the terrors thou tellest me of; [*Odysseus threatens Neoptolemus.*] no, nor do I obey thy violence so as to do it.

ODYS. So then we shall fight, not with the Trojans, but with thee.

NEOP. Well, come what must.

ODYS. Seest thou my right hand fingering my sword-hilt?

NEOP. Nay, verily thou shalt see me doing this same thing, and no longer tarrying.

ODYS. Well, I will suffer thee; but I shall tell this to the whole host on my coming, and they shall punish thee.

1250. NEOP. Discreetly said; and if thou be thus wise in future, perchance thou wilt keep thy foot from trouble. But thou, O son of Poëas, Philoctetes, I say, come forth and quit this rocky shelter. [*Exit Odysseus.*]

PHIL. What is this noise of shouting once more rising near my cave? Why do ye call me forth? What is the matter, strangers? Ah me! Evil is the matter. Surely ye are not come bringing me some great suffering to crown my woes.

NEOP. Take heart, and hearken to the words I come to bring thee.

PHIL. I am afraid: for even before it was by fair words that I fared ill, persuaded by thy words.

NEOP. Canst thou not then change thy mind again?

PHIL. Such wast thou in speech when thou didst steal my bow,—honest-seeming, treacherous at heart.

NEOP. But not so now:—and I would hear from thee whether thou hast resolved to be steadfast in remaining, or to sail with us.

PHIL. Stay, speak no more, for vainly will be said all that thou mayst say.

Ph.

NEOP. Is that thy firm resolve?

PHIL. Ay, be assured—even firmer than I say.

NEOP. Well, I could have wished thou hadst been persuaded by my words: but if haply I speak not to the purpose, I have done.

1286. PHIL. Yes, thou wilt say all in vain; for thou shalt never win my heart to kindness towards thee who, taking my means of life by guile, hast defrauded me, and after that thou dost come to school me, thou hated son of noblest sire. May ye perish, first the Atridae, and then the son of Laertes, and thou.

NEOP. Curse no more; but receive from my hand these weapons.

PHIL. How sayest thou? Are we being tricked a second time?

NEOP. Not so; I swear it by the majesty most high of holy Zeus.

PHIL. O words most welcome, if they be true.

NEOP. The deed shall be here before thine eyes. Come, stretch forth thy right hand, and be master of the bow.

Enter Odysseus suddenly.

ODYS. Nay, I forbid it—as may Heaven witness—in the name of the Atridae and the whole host.

PHIL. My son, whose voice was that? Ah! did I hear Odysseus?

ODYS. Be sure of that; ay, and thou seest me nigh, who will carry thee off by force to the plains of Troy, whether Achilles' son wish or no.

PHIL. But to thy cost, if this dart go straight.

1300. NEOP. Ah! No! no! In Heaven's name, let not the arrow fly.

PHIL. Let my hand go, in Heaven's name, dearest son.

NEOP. I will not let go.

PHIL. Alas! Why hast thou hindered me from slaying with my bow a man who is my enemy and foe?

NEOP. Nay, that is honourable neither for me nor thee.

PHIL. Well, at any rate know thus much,—that the chieftains of the host, the lying heralds of the Achaeans, are cowards at the spear's point, albeit brave in words.

NEOP. Be it so. Thou hast thy bow now, and thou canst in no point have anger or complaint against me.

PHIL. I own it. Yes, thou showest the race from which thou wert born—no son of Sisyphus, but from Achilles, who had the fairest repute when he was among the living, as now among the dead.

NEOP. I am rejoiced that thou art praising my father and myself; but hear what I would win from thee. Men needs must bear the fortunes given them by Heaven; but for all who are set in self-chosen ills, as thou art, for these it is meet that none should have ~~or~~ pardon or pity. (1321) But thou art of savage mood and wilt hear no counsellor, and if any one give thee advice, speaking in good will, thou loathest him, deeming him a foe and adversary. Yet will I speak; I call on Zeus, the god of oaths, to witness. And know this well—ay, write in thy heart. Thou sufferedst from disease by a doom from heaven, for that thou camest near to Chryse's guard, the serpent who in secret keeps his watch over her unsheltered shrine. And know that thou wilt never find respite from this grievous disease, so long as the same sun rises on that side and sets again on this, until thou go of thine own free will to the plains of Troy, and meeting with the sons of Aesculapius among us, be relieved of thy disease, and with the help of this bow and me shalt prove thyself the destroyer of her towers. Now, how I know that these things are so ordained, I will tell thee. (1337) We have a man captured from Troy, Helenus, first of seers, and he tells us plainly that these things must come to pass; and furthermore, that within this present summer needs must all Troy be taken; or he freely offers himself to death if he be proved false in saying this. Since, then, thou knowest this, give thy willing consent. For fair is the gain, being chosen as the very noblest of the Greeks; first to come into hands that have power to heal, and then, by taking Troy of many tears to win passing great renown.

PHIL. O hated life! why, ah, why dost thou keep me in the light of day above, and sufferest me not to journey unto Hades? Woe is me! What shall I do? How shall I mistrust this man's words, who with kind intent has given me counsel? But am I then to yield? Then how, ill-starred

that I am, when I have done this, shall I come unto the light of day? Who shall greet me? O mine eyes that have seen all the woes that surround me, how will ye endure to see me abiding with those sons of Atreus who wrought my ruin? how with the murderous son of Laertes? (1358) Nay, it is not the sorrow of the past that stings me, but I seem to foresee how I must be treated by them in future. For those whose mind has become the mother of evils, their every act it trains to evil ways. And, indeed, I too had marvelled at thee herein; for it was thy duty never to go to Troy thyself, and to hinder me from going. For they have outraged thee in despoiling thee of thy father's prize (for they in awarding the arms of thy father judged the hapless Ajax a baser man than Odysseus), and after that wilt thou go to be their ally, and constrain me to this? Nay, not so, my son. Come, as thou didst swear to me, carry me home. And abiding thyself in Seyros, suffer them for their evil to die an evil death. And thus thou shalt win double thanks from me and double from my father. And thou wilt not, by giving help to evil men, show thyself like to them at heart.

NEOP. Thy words are reasonable, but still I am fain that thou shouldst put thy trust in Heaven and my words, and sail from this land with me, thy friend.

PHIL. What! to the plains of Troy and the son of Atreus, my worst foe,—with this wretched foot?

1378. NEOP. Nay, rather to those who shall free thee and thine ulcerous foot from pain, and save thee from disease.

PHIL. Strange is thy counsel: what canst thou mean?

NEOP. What I see is best in its issue both for me and thee.

PHIL. And in saying this feelest thou no shame before the gods?

NEOP. No; for how could one feel shame in doing good?

PHIL. Dost thou mean good to the Atridae herein or for me?

NEOP. To thee, methinks, for I am thy friend, and such are my words.

PHIL. How, when thou wouldst give me up to my foes?

NEOP. My friend, learn not to be foolhardy in misfortune.

PHIL. Thou wilt ruin me, I know thou wilt, with these thy words.

NEOP. Nay, not I: I say that thou dost not understand.

PHIL. Do I not know that the Atridae cast me out?

NEOP. But though they cast thee out, look if they will not bring thee safely back.

PHIL. Never of mine own will—if I must look on Troy.

NEOP. What then shall we do, if with our words we shall fail to move thee to aught that we bid? Since the easiest way for me were that I should cease from speech and thou shouldst live as thou art now living, without deliverance.

1397. PHIL. Let me suffer what I needs must. But the promise thou madest me, grasping my right hand,—fulfil that for me, my son, and tarry not nor make further mention of Troy. For I have had full measure of lament.

NEOP. If thou art willing, let us go.

PHIL. O generous the word thou hast spoken.

NEOP. Now plant thy footsteps firmly.

PHIL. Ay, with all my might.

NEOP. And how shall I escape the Achaeans' blame?

PHIL. Think not of it.

NEOP. What if they should ravage my country?

PHIL. I near at hand . . .

NEOP. What assistance wilt thou render?

PHIL. . . . with the shafts of Heracles

NEOP. What meanest thou?

PHIL. . . . will prevent their coming nigh.

NEOP. Set forth, bidding the land farewell.

Enter Heracles ex machina.

HERACLES.

1409. Nay, not yet, till thou hearest our words, O son of Poëas; own now that thou hearest with thine ears the voice of Heracles and seest his face. For thy sake have I come, leaving my heavenly dwellings, to tell thee the purposes of Zeus and to stay the journey whereon thou art setting forth;

and do thou give ear to my sayings. And first of all I will tell thee of mine own fortunes—the many labours that I endured and passed through to the end, ere I won the glorious meed of immortality as thou mayest behold. And this, be sure, is thy destined lot, that after these present woes thou shouldest make thy life renowned. (1423) Going with this man to the Trojan city, first thou shalt be relieved of thy sore disease, for thy valour chosen out as first of the host. Paris, who was the cause of these evils, thou shalt with my bow amerce of life, and shalt sack Troy, and having received from the army the prize of the best and bravest, thou shalt send the spoils to thy home. And whatsoever spoils thou dost receive from this host carry to my pyre as a thank-offering for my bow. And now to thee, son of Achilles, I gave this counsel: nor thou without him nor he without thee can take the Trojan realm. But like twain lions sharing one pasture ye guard each the other. And I will send Aesculapius to Ilium to heal thy disease. Yet again by my bow must it be captured. But of this be mindful, what time ye lay waste the land, that ye show reverence to the powers of Heaven: since father Zeus deems all things else of less account; for that piety goes with men in death, and live they or die it doth not perish.

1445. PHIL. O thou who hast made utterance that I yearned for, and shown thyself late in time, I will not disobey thy sayings.

NEOP. I too vote this way in my thought.

HERA. Then delay not long to act; for occasion and yon fair wind is urging us at the stern.

1452. PHIL. Come then, at my going let me bid farewell to this island. Fare thou well, O chamber that hath kept watch with me, and ye Nymphs of the stream and the meadow, and the loud roar of the crag that juts into the deep, where oft ere now, though hidden in deep recess, my head was wet with the blasts of the South, and oft did Hermes' mountain send forth a hollow sound in echo to my cry mid the tempest of my woe. But now, O ye fountains and thou Lycian spring, we are leaving you, leaving at last, though we never touched upon this thought before. Fare-

well, thou sea-encircled land of Lemnos, and with fair voyage speed me to my heart's desire, to the bourne where mighty destiny is leading, and counsel of friends, and the all-subduing deity, who hath brought these things to their issue.

CHOR. Now let us all go together, after a prayer to the Nymphs of the sea that they come to watch over our return.

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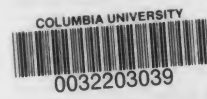
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